

Back at school, you might have watched him schlep his 6-foot-4 frame around in khaki shorts and T-shirts for three straight months, but you wouldn't have considered trucking out to a morning job interview without rousing him from a sound sleep and asking if the jacket or slacks you'd picked out for yourself made you look like an apprentice televangelist. On one such occasion, I wandered into Karleton's room in the house we shared at school for just this kind of fashion consultation. Chucking diplomacy to the breeze, he wordlessly sized me up, went to his own closet and picked out a necktie of his own that, as he later put it, was a little less "Carnaby Street."

There are people you're proud to call friends, and then there are people whose friends you're proud to be. I always felt I got the better end of our bargain. When Karleton asked me to be the best man at his wedding in 1994, it was like being nominated to an elite inner circle. I repaid the distinction by getting the flu on the morning of his nuptials and passing out cold, mid-ceremony in the early October North Carolina heat. An hour later, the vows exchanged in my absence, he came inside to the couch where I was recovering, threw his arms around me, and said, without a trace of annoyance, "Thanks for giving us the only wedding video in history that'll be worth watching in slo-mo."

Armchair psychologists will tell you people who respond reflexively to tragic or unpleasant events with a joke or offhand remark are invoking a classic little pain-saving defense mechanism called "reaction formation."

Karleton was a world-class reaction-former. I can't say for sure, but my guess is that if he'd been watching Tuesday's events on TV at home, rather than sitting on a plane bound for Los Angeles, he would have summed everything up with a vintage understatement: "Man, whoever did all this . . . they're gonna have to give back a lot of those humanitarian awards."

IN MEMORY OF CLYDE L. CHOATE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise today with great sadness to mark the passing of an American hero and an Illinois legend. Clyde Choate spent his 81 years in service to his country and to his State, and we are fortunate indeed to have known him.

Clyde Choate was an Illinoisan through and through, born in downstate Franklin County and a lifelong resident of nearby Union County. Southern Illinois is the heart of coal country, and Clyde came from a family for whom mining was both a way of living and a way of life. Perhaps we can trace his later ability to stand up for himself as a State legislator to the fact that he had 11 brothers and sisters. Anyone growing up in a 14-member household would feel right at home in a large deliberative body.

Shortly after the outbreak of World War II, Clyde enlisted as a private in the U.S. Army and found himself deployed to the European theater, where he spent some 31 months. It was there, on the battlefields of France, that Staff Sergeant Clyde Choate demonstrated a determination and pride that would

mark his public service for the rest of his life.

In late October of 1944, the tank destroyer battalion Choate commanded was engaged by a German tank and company of infantrymen. With his anti-tank weaponry destroyed, Staff Sergeant Choate left a position of safety to search for trapped comrades and to chase the enemy tank, which was by then moving to attack American troops nearby. Grabbing a rocket launcher, Choate singlehandedly attacked the tank, disabling it, and then killed its crew with his pistol. He completed destruction of the German vehicle while under heavy enemy fire by dropping a grenade into the turret. With their firepower rendered useless, the German troops retreated, having been turned back solely through the heroic actions of Staff Sergeant Clyde Choate.

In presenting him with the Congressional Medal of Honor, this country's highest award, in the East Room of the White House on August 23, 1945, President Harry Truman noted that "Staff Sergeant Choate's great daring in assaulting an enemy tank single-handed, his determination to follow the vehicle after it had passed his position, and his skill and crushing thoroughness in the attack prevented the enemy from capturing a battalion command post and turned a probable defeat into a tactical success."

A New York Times story written that day notes that President Truman thanked the medal recipients and commented that their "deeds demonstrated that when leadership was required, no matter what the emergency, it came to the top through the young men of America." How true these words ring today when we think about the young men and women who are defending our country in the battle against a new and frightening enemy.

Leadership rose to the top through Clyde Choate on a daily basis. His political career was born that late summer day in our Nation's capital when the young veteran seized his opportunity to lobby at the highest level and expressed to President Truman his concerns about the coal industry in southern Illinois. Perhaps, President Truman suggested, the young Clyde Choate should run for public office. The very next year, Clyde was a candidate for the Illinois House of Representatives and won. He took up residence in Union County's seat and kept it warm for the next 30 years. In that three-decade span, he served as both minority and majority leader of the Illinois House many times.

I remember State Representative Clyde Choate. He was passionately committed to southern Illinois but could always find common ground with his colleagues from the ethnic neighborhoods of our State's biggest cities. His common sense and great sense of

humor made him a trusted leader and favorite friend of Democrats and Republicans alike. After leaving the Illinois General Assembly, Clyde Choate became a strong voice for Southern Illinois University.

Last year when I visited southern Illinois, my friend Clyde Choate came to my town meeting. Though illness had dimmed his vision, nothing could dim his insight. He pulled me to the side and in his characteristic style whispered into my ear about politics, the President and our national agenda. His title was gone but his passion for the important issues of our time was undiminished.

Clyde Choate was a soldier for our great nation and a fighter for the great State of Illinois. We have benefitted tremendously from his dedication, his drive and above all, his leadership. He will be sorely missed by the people of Illinois and, most especially, by his neighbors and friends in Union County, all of whom he so tirelessly served.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SEAFORD, DELAWARE FIRE DEPARTMENT

• Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, on November 10th, 1901, several leading citizens of Seaford, DE met in the Town Council room to discuss the organization of a fire company. They understood what we are so very mindful of today, that local firefighters are a key part of our first and best defense against disaster.

By the end of November 1901, there were more than 50 members of the new Seaford Volunteer Fire Department, and W.H. Miller had been elected to serve as its first president. The first chief, T.H. Scott, was elected in early December, and soon after led the company on its first fire response on December 18th, 1901, at a building that was both a store and a home on Seaford's High Street.

The Seaford firefighters used hand-drawn hose reels and ladder trailers until 1921, when the first fire engine was purchased. It is worth taking note that Government money helped buy that first engine, a reminder that a public investment in the fire service is necessary and appropriate. This partnership is all the more important 80 years later, when we ask our firefighters to respond to such a range of threats and dangers.

Today, the Seaford Volunteer Fire Company fleet includes four Pierce fire engines, an aerial truck, two ambulances, a rescue truck, a brush truck, a utility truck and a van, as well as "Old Number 4," a 1948 Seagraves used for fire prevention programs. Four paid ambulance attendants now serve the community, with more than 50 volunteer firefighters still ready to answer